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# The Passion Sadness According to St. Thomas

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THE PASSION SADNESS ACCORDING  
TO ST. THOMAS

by  
Benjamin J. Urmston, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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## LIFE

Benjamin Joseph Urmston, S.J., was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, September 20, 1925.

He was graduated from Mt. Healthy High School, Mt. Healthy, Ohio, June, 1943. In July, 1943, he entered Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. After two and a half years in the army, he entered the Society of Jesus in September, 1946, and enrolled again in Xavier University. He transferred to West Baden College of Loyola University in September, 1950. He was graduated in June, 1951, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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## PREFACE

"Entia non multiplicanda sine necessitate." Ockham's razor is as old as reason itself. No work should be undertaken which is not useful or purposeful. It might be good, therefore, to indicate the scope of this thesis. The purpose of this thesis is to examine and expound the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning the passion sadness. As a philosophical work, this thesis will investigate the ultimate causes of sadness according to St. Thomas. Thus this work will give St. Thomas' teaching on the essence of sadness, its extrinsic causes, and its effects. Finally, the thesis will state the ultimate causes according to St. Thomas for the goodness or malice of sadness.

Sadness is a common word in the English language; it is also a common experience. At times sadness can even reach serious proportions. A thorough knowledge of such a basic emotion can certainly be useful.

In philosophy, knowledge of the passions is of direct interest and importance to the field of psychology. Psychology studies the ultimate cause of life in man, the human soul; and all emotions or passions are immanent operations of the soul. This thesis is also of interest to ethics. The ultimate causes

for the goodness or malice of sadness will be investigated in this work. Moreover, frequently the influence of emotion must be considered to determine the morality of other acts. St. Thomas himself devotes five questions of the Summa Theologiae exclusively to the passion sadness. At the same time only one question apiece is allotted to such important matters as the existence of God and the nature of truth. This would indicate that, as far as St. Thomas is concerned, sadness is at least of some importance.

Sadness, then, is of some interest and importance in itself. It is an emotion which has been discussed by philosophers from the time of Aristotle and the ancient Stoics down to the present day. The aim of this thesis, however, is to examine and expound St. Thomas' doctrine concerning the passion sadness. No one today questions the value of a thorough knowledge of St. Thomas. The Angelic Doctor is recognized as the outstanding Catholic philosopher. Any study of his doctrine will be useful to philosophy.

To date there has been no lengthy treatment on sadness as such according to St. Thomas. A number of authors, such as Fr. Lindworsky and Fr. Moore, have treated the passions in general. Thomas' Moore's Dynamic Psychology spends some time on depression, which is a type of sadness.<sup>1</sup> No attempt is made, how-

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Verner Moore, Dynamic Psychology, Chicago, 1926, 189-198.

ever, to explain what St. Thomas teaches on the subject. John Lindworsky treats of the emotions, of course; but he takes modern authors and findings as his point of departure. In Emotions and Morals Fr. Patrick O'Brien discusses the morality of the passions in general and continues with an extended treatment of two particular emotions, anger and fear. The morality of sadness, however, he does not discuss. Classic commentators such as Cajetan and John of St. Thomas comment directly on the text of St. Thomas. Nevertheless, they pass over several articles on sadness and do not give a continuous, systematic treatment. In brief, many authors treat of the emotions. Several have brief discussions of sadness. But no work gives any long, specialized treatment of sadness. And when sadness is treated, no attempt is made to interpret and expound the text of St. Thomas in a continuous manner. Thus there is room and need for a more detailed and more systematic textual study of Thomas' doctrine on sadness.

The principal passages in which St. Thomas' doctrine on sadness is expounded are the Summa Theologiae, I-II, questions 22-25 and 35-39, and the De Veritate, questions 22, 25, and 26. In this thesis these passages will be interpreted first of all from the immediate context and from the aim and force of the argument. Where necessary or possible, these texts will be interpreted and explained by other texts supplied by St. Thomas himself which



treat of the same topic or of the elements contained in the passages giving express discussion of sadness. Brief treatments by classic commentators on St. Thomas and by modern Thomists will be used from time to time. They will not be used constantly, first of all because their discussions do not cover all the portions of the text. Moreover, the aim of this thesis is to set forth Thomas' doctrine. Thus this work will try to avoid getting Thomas' doctrine from secondary sources rather than from St. Thomas himself.

The purpose of the thesis has been stated. What is St. Thomas' purpose in treating of sadness? A treatment of sadness finds its way into the Summa Theologiae because it is an act of man. The purpose of the Summa is to treat of God as the first cause and last end of all things, especially of man.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, St. Thomas treats of the way in which a rational creature must tend toward God. Man arrives at his last end by performing certain acts, and so St. Thomas examines all human acts to discover which acts will help man toward his end and which will hinder him. Some acts are proper to man; other acts he shares with other animals. The passions of the soul belong to the last cate-

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<sup>2</sup> S.T., I, 2, 1, Summa Theologiae, Marietti ed., Taurini-Romae, 1950.

gory.<sup>3</sup> More effort is required to discern how a treatment of the passions found its way into the De Veritate, which by its title is a discussion of the true, not of the good. However, a rather close connection can be found. Besides speculative truth there is also practical truth. In the judgment of the practical intellect a free choice is often involved. Since often the will freely accepts a particular good, frequently the practical intellect does not operate without the harmonious concurrence of the will. But the will is influenced by the sense appetites and their emotions and passions. In order, then, to understand practical truth, a knowledge of the operations of both intellectual and sensitive appetite must be had.<sup>4</sup>

Since this is a philosophical work, this thesis will prescind completely from any theological aspects of the subject. Thus no use will be made of Thomas' appeals to scriptural authority. This procedure is possible because even though St. Thomas' ultimate goal may be a theological discussion, he does make much use of rational arguments and strictly philosophical considerations.

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3 S.T., I-II, 6, 1.

4 Confer Thomas Aquinas, Truth, trans. Robert W. Schmidt, S.J., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1954, vi.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS A PASSION?

No one would be surprised if he were told that love is a passion. Some eyebrows might be raised, however, if it was announced that sadness is a passion. Yet this is exactly what St. Thomas affirms. In fact, Thomas asserts that sadness is more strictly a passion than love is. Because this statement will be quite easily accepted as soon as the meaning of passion is explained, a clear and accurate definition of passion will be the work of the first chapter. No attempt will be made here to give an exhaustive treatment of the passions in general. This thesis is primarily concerned with sadness. Sadness is a passion and cannot be understood as long as the notion of passion is not clear. One can hardly have a clear notion of the species as long as he is confused concerning the genus. On the other hand, the first interest of the present work is the species, and a definition of passion is developed only to arrive at a definition of sadness.

The modern reader finds the word passion used to describe some violent emotion or a deep-seated, permanent tendency to some particular species of emotion. Today a passion usually

means an intense feeling or emotion or a strong predilection for a particular object. The Latin word passio used by St. Thomas had a much broader meaning. Basically, passio means being passive, undergoing, or being acted upon. Passio is such a pregnant term, however, that it can be translated by such varied expressions as "suffering," "receiving," "experiencing," "emotion," or finally the English word "passion." Despite the fact that passion usually has a much narrower meaning than passio, this thesis will translate St. Thomas' passio by passion. Passion is still used in English in a philosophical sense to denote a being affected or acted upon by external agents;<sup>1</sup> and, as the thesis progresses, the English word will acquire for the reader the fuller meaning of the Latin word.

St. Thomas tells us that the Latin word passio comes from the Greek word patin.<sup>2</sup> The Latin letters patin probable refer to  $\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\tau\upsilon$ , a form of  $\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\omega$ , which means what St. Thomas says it means, to receive, be affected, or to suffer. Therefore, a passion is so named because it is the result of an agent extrinsic to the subject of the passion.

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1 For the English meanings of passion see Webster's New International Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1950, 1787.

2 De Ver., 26, 1 c, Quaestiones Disputatae, ed. R. M. Spiazzi, Taurini-Romae, 1949, Vol. I.

Several passages develop one of the characteristic notes of passion, passivity. The subject of the passion or the patient is drawn passively toward the agent.<sup>3</sup> When a steak is placed before a hungry man, he is immediately attracted toward the steak. The steak has a magic power that pulls the appetite of the hungry man toward it even though the man be a Catholic and the day be a Friday. The inner passion that the man undergoes is an effect of the agent, the steak.<sup>4</sup> When the movement of the appetite toward the steak is considered as arising from an external agent, it is naturally called a passion.<sup>5</sup>

The agent of a passion of the soul has three functions as it attracts or repels the patient. The first task that the agent performs is to make the patient well-disposed toward it. If the agent is a good, it causes the patient to be inclined toward it. If the agent or object is not yet possessed, it also causes a movement of this well-disposed patient toward it. This second movement is toward the actual possession of the desired object. The third function of the agent is to cause the patient to rest with the object once the patient has obtained it.<sup>6</sup> Later

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3 S.T., I-II, 22, 2 c.

4 Ibid., 26, 2 c.

5 Ibid., I, 41, 1 ad 2.

6 Ibid., I-II, 23, 4 c.

we shall see how this threefold function of the agent differentiates the passions. The present concern is to show the influence the agent exerts over the patient.

Besides passio, two other Latin words are used to denote a passion, affectio and perturbatio.<sup>7</sup> Affectio retains the note of being acted upon by another. Perturbatio has the additional implication of being affected adversely, being disturbed or changed from one's usual disposition.

All these descriptions of a passion which have been given are a preparation for a real, essential definition. But before the strict definition of a passion is considered, the wide use of the word must be recognized. In a broad use of the word, any reception whatsoever can be called a passion.<sup>8</sup> In this wide sense, any creature which has potency and can be perfected can experience a passion.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, pati is equivalent to perficere. A creature which has this kind of passion need not lose a form which it had previously. In a general way, the air is passive when it is lit up. The air receives a perfection, but nothing is taken from it.<sup>10</sup> Any reader of St. Thomas is familiar

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7 S.T., I-II, 22, Sed Contra.

8 De Ver., 26, 3 c; see also In II De Anima, 11, nn. 365, 366, ed. Piroetta, 3rd ed., Turin, 1948.

9 De Ver., 26, 1 c.

10 S.T., I-II, 22, 1 c.

with the statement intelligere est quoddam pati. However, cognition is not a passion in the strict sense, for no form is lost in cognition.<sup>11</sup> In the strict sense passion implies the loss of a contrary form when a new form is gained.

Once the wide use of the word as any reception whatsoever is recognized, our attention can turn to a real, essential definition which will give us the proper use of passion as applied to a passion of the soul. St. John Damascene gives us such a definition. "Passio est motus appetitivae virtutis sensibilis in imaginatione boni vel mali."<sup>12</sup> This definition is accepted by St. Thomas and will be our starting point. However, what this definition meant to St. Thomas needs a detailed explanation before a clear, precise concept of passion will result.

The word motus used in Damascene's definition could refer to many different kinds of movements or changes. What kind of change is involved here in a passion? The motion spoken of here is certainly not generation. Since a change is always from something to something else, motion is always between contraries. If there is no common element in the change, there is no change. This means that there must be a terminus a quo in change. Gener-

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11 Cf. De Ver., 26, 3, ad 17; In III De Anima, 7, n. 676.

12 S.T., I-II, 22, 3, Sed contra.

ation is called a movement only in a wider sense because of prime matter, which is the common element in generation. But absolutely speaking, prime matter is not a being. Thus there is really nothing from which generation begins.<sup>13</sup> Besides, generation is a substantial change. Obviously, a man does not change substantially when he undergoes a passion.

Clearly, no local motion is involved in a passion. In general, a passion is the reception of a form. But place is something which is extrinsic to that which is moved.<sup>14</sup> According to St. Thomas, nothing is received in the subject in local motion. "Nam in motu locali non recipitur aliquid immobile, sed ipsum mobile recipitur in aliquo loco."<sup>15</sup>

The motion of a passion is an alteration, a change in the line of quality. All change is between contraries. Therefore, when there is change in the proper sense of the word, a form is received in the patient which is contrary to the form which is lost.<sup>16</sup> Thus an alteration takes place when a sun-bather becomes tan and loses his normal color. In the strictest

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13 In V Phys., 2, n. 8, Opera Omnia Sancti Thomae, Leonine ed., Vol. II, Rome, 1884, 233.

14 In III Sent., 15, 2, 1, sol. 1, Scriptum Super Sententiis, Moos ed., Paris, 1933, Vol. III.

15 De Ver., 26, 1 c (in prin.).

16 In II De Anima, 11, n. 365.



sense, a passion occurs only when a form natural to the subject is lost, and an adverse quality is introduced. When a man suffers adversely by losing his health and becoming sick, he is undergoing a passion in the strictest use of the word.<sup>17</sup> However, a man can experience a passion in a less strict sense by losing a form which is not natural for him. When a man casts off his sickness and becomes well, the change that takes place in him is still called a passion. It is not a passion in the strictest sense because a passion implies that the agent has scored a victory over the patient. And, as St. Thomas puts it, "Omne autem quod vincitur, quasi trahitur extra terminos proprios ad terminos alienos."<sup>18</sup> Thus, properly speaking, the reception involved in a passion must be accompanied by the loss of the opposite form. A passion cannot be any reception whatsoever. In the strictest sense, however, this opposite form must be a quality natural to the subject; and the form which is received must be an adverse quality. Since this reception and loss of contrary forms is proper to an alteration, the motus of Damascene's definition must be reduced to a qualitative change.

The motus in question seems to be a complex being. Under which one of the ten predicaments would it be classified?

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<sup>17</sup> S.T., I-II, 22, 1 c.

<sup>18</sup> In III Sent., 15, 2, 1, 1.

We have just seen that a passion is a quality. From the point of view of the agent, a movement is also an action. Is the movement in a passion an action, a passion, a quality, or all three? Actually the one act of movement belongs both to the agent and to the patient. The sun's rays wither a flower. A flower is withered by the sun's rays. Here is one and the same act. If the movement is considered as arising from the sun's rays, it is an action. When the sun's rays wither a flower, an action occurs. If the motion is considered as received in that which is moved, it is a passion.<sup>19</sup> When a flower is withered by the sun's rays, a passion occurs. Thus there is really only one act. There seem to be two acts only because the one act can be considered from two different angles.<sup>20</sup> Motion, itself, is a unique being. Before the motion starts, the being in motion is completely in potency to the motion. After the motion stops, the being in motion is completely in act in respect to the motion. While the motion is actually occurring, the being in motion is no longer completely in potency for the motion has started. Nor is it completely in act, for the motion has not yet reached its terminus.

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19 S.T., I, 41, 1 ad 2.

20 "Sic enim idem actus secundum rem, est duorum secundum diversam rationem; agentis quidem, secundum quod est ab eo; patientis autem, secundum quod est in ipso." In III Phys., 5, n. 10.

Motion, therefore, is an act but an imperfect act.<sup>21</sup> Motion cannot be put into the same class as other beings which are perfect acts. However, the kind of motion can be designated by considering the terminus toward which the motion tends. Alteration is really not a quality, but is classed as a quality because the term of its movement is a quality.<sup>22</sup> In this way the imperfect act which is motus can be looked upon as an act, a passion, and a quality.

The concept which has been presented of motus applies to any passion. The predicament passion has one essential note, that the motion in that which is moved be considered as arising from an extrinsic agent. When water is heated by fire, the change is a passion. In this example, the motion is considered as arising from a cause extrinsic to the patient. But St. John Damascene is not defining the passions of inanimate things nor even of plants. Damascene is defining a passion of the soul.

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21 "Cum enim aqua est solum in potentia calida, nondum movetur: cum vero est jam calefacta, terminatus est motus calefactionis: cum vero jam participat aliquod de calore sed imperfecte, tunc movetur ad calorem: nam quod calefit paulatim participat calorem, magis ac magis. Ipse igitur actus imperfectus caloris in calefactibili existens, est motus." In III Phys., 2, n. 3; see also In I De Anima, 6, n. 82; In I De Anima, 10, n. 160; In II De Anima, 10, n. 356; In III De Anima, 12, n. 766.

22 "Quilibet motus est in eodem genere cum suo termino: non quidem ita quod motus qui est ad qualitatem, sit species qualitatis: sed per reductionem." In V Phys., 3, n. 2.

Immediately a difficulty arises. In an alteration, the reception of one form means the loss of a contrary form. Motus in the strict sense is between contraries. Corporeal and material beings lose old forms when they acquire new forms. When water is heated, for example, it loses its coldness. But the soul is immaterial. Immaterial beings do not lose their own form when they acquire a new one.<sup>23</sup> In cognition, a man can see the green grass and still retain his own whiteness. A man can know what a dog is without really being one. Can motion take place in an immaterial soul? The soul does not gradually lose old forms and acquire new ones.

The difficulty could be solved by calling a passion of the soul a wide use of the word passion. The wide use of passion which does apply to cognition has already been mentioned. When passion is used widely, the reception of a new form takes place without the loss of an old one. But Thomas insists that motion is used properly when it is applied to a passion of the soul. "In appetitu vero sensitivo proprie invenitur motus, et secundum alterationem et secundum motum localem."<sup>24</sup> The Angelic Doctor goes on to explain that a man will move from place to place to get the object of his passion. Passion will also cause a strict

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23 S.T., I, 14, 1 c.

24 In I De Anima, 10, n. 158.

qualitative change in a man. According to St. Thomas when a man is angry, his very blood begins to boil. Thus, because of the accompanying bodily change, the soul can experience a passion.

The last statement would indicate that a physical change is a necessary ingredient in the definition of passion; and as he interprets Aristotle, St. Thomas soon affirms that such is the case. An essential definition must include both the form and the matter. Sometimes anger is defined as a desire for revenge. The latter definition gives only the form. Sometimes anger is defined as a heating of the blood around the heart. This definition includes only the matter. Neither definition is adequate. Since passions of the soul are acts of both soul and body, the bodily change must be included in the definition.<sup>25</sup>

Experience teaches that bodily changes do accompany the passions. Besides the change involved in anger, St. Thomas gives a vivid description of the bodily change that takes place in fear. The heart contracts and becomes cold. The skin changes color and becomes pale. "Nam cor ad terribile contrahitur et infrigidatur, et alteratur homo et pallescit."<sup>26</sup> The effect of intense emotion

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25 In I De Anima, 2, nn. 23 and 24.

26 Ibid., 10, n. 151.

on the body is well known.<sup>27</sup> This close connection between the passion and the bodily change led in modern times to the James-Lange theory which identified the emotion with the perception of the bodily change.<sup>28</sup>

Since a bodily change is essential to a passion, the change that takes place is not motus in the wide use of the word but in the strict use. The gradual alteration consists precisely in this bodily change. St. Thomas states this fact very clearly and concisely.

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27 Bishop Fulton Sheen gives a striking example of the extent of bodily change during intense emotion. "There is a case on record in England of a nursing mother whose milk poisoned her baby because of the intense hatred which she bore her husband." Fulton J. Sheen, Ph.D., D.D., Peace of Soul, New York, 1949, 110.

28 No one could expound James' theory in a more colorful way than he himself does.

"My theory, on the contrary, is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion. . . . The more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike.

. . . . . Every one of the bodily changes, whatsoever it be is FELT. . . . If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind. . . . What kind of an emotion of fear would be left if the feeling neither of the quickened heartbeats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of goose-flesh nor of visceral stirrings, were present, it is quite impossible for me to think. . . . A purely disembodied human emotion is a non-entity." William James, Principles of Psychology, New York, 1931, II, 449-452.

Ira, et similiter quaelibet passio animae, dupliciter potest considerari: uno modo secundum propriam rationem irae; et sic per prius est in anima quam in corpore; et alio modo in quantum est passio; et sic per prius est in corpore; ibi enim primo accipit rationem passionis.<sup>29</sup>

Nam secundum receptionem tantum, dicitur quod sentire et intelligere est quoddam pati. Passio autem cum abiectione non est nisi secundum transmutationem corporalem; unde passio proprie dicta non potest competere animae nisi per accidens, in quantum scilicet compositum patitur.<sup>30</sup>

The bodily change is an essential ingredient of the definition. In fact, it is because of the alteration of the body that a passion is a passion and is called a passion.<sup>31</sup>

After St. Thomas has established that a bodily change is essential to a passion, he considers an interesting objection. Both sensitive appetite and sensitive cognition are accompanied by bodily changes. If a passion of the soul occurs because of bodily changes, sense cognition should also be called a passion in the proper sense of the word and not only in a wide sense. Thomas answers that the bodily change in cognition is inten-

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29 De Ver., 26, 2, ad 5.

30 S.T., I-II, 22, 1 c.

31 Cardinal Cajetan has the same interpretation of St. Thomas' notion of a passion:

"Omnis passio animae est cum aliqua praeternaturali mutatione, quia cordis motus intenditur aut remittitur a suo naturali motu; et ex hoc illa opera animae quae vocamus ejus passionem, habent rationem et nomen passionis." In S.T., I-II, 22, Thomas de Vio Cajetanus, Commentaria In Summa Theologiae, Leonine ed., Romae, 1891, VI, 169.

tional. An intentio rei is received in sense cognition. The act of cognition consists in the reception of the form of another precisely as the form of another. The subjective change in the organ is not intrinsic to the act of cognition itself which looks to the object. On the other hand, appetency is a subjective striving toward the object. The bodily change is part of the movement of the soul toward or away from the object. Therefore, the bodily change is an essential constituent of the act of appetency but not of the act of cognition.<sup>32</sup>

Damascene's full definition of a passion of the soul includes the notion of appetite. "Passio est motus appetitivae virtutis sensibilis in imaginatione boni vel mali." The word appetitivae needs further elucidation. St. Thomas analyzes the Latin word appetitus to give a clearer understanding of what appetite is. "Appetere autem nihil aliud est quam aliquid petere, quasi tendere in aliquid ad ipsum ordinatum."<sup>33</sup> The act of the appetite, therefore, is a striving or stretching of the subject toward its proper object or end. All appetite arises from a need for something which is not possessed as yet.<sup>34</sup> The act of appetency in creatures is nothing but a movement of the subject

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32 Cf. S.T., I-II, 22, 2 ad 3.

33 De Ver., 22, 1 c (ad finem).

34 In I Phys., 15, n. 8.



toward things which would actualize the subject and bring it more perfection. Prime matter has an appetite for form; plants have an appetite for moisture; animals have an appetite for meat. Every man experiences within himself this inner drive for more perfection.

It is important, though, not to confuse this search for perfection with any act of cognition. Appetite is not cognition. The appetite seeks the thing as it is in itself; cognition grasps the thing intentionally. The good which perfects the appetite is in the thing. That which is true and perfects the intellect is in the intellect intentionally.<sup>35</sup> Cognition possesses only an intention of the good; the appetite wants the reality.<sup>36</sup> St. Thomas gives a brief and lucid comparison of the two acts:

Sicut bonum nominat id in quod tendit appetitus, ita verum nominat id in quod tendit intellectus. Hoc autem distat inter appetitum et intellectum, sive quamcumque cognitionem, quia cognitio est secundum quod cognitum est in cognoscente: appetitus autem est secundum quod appetens inclinatur in ipsam rem appetitam. Et sic terminus appetitus, quod est bonum, est in re appetibili; sed terminus cognitionis, quod est verum, est in ipso intellectu.<sup>37</sup>

There are two ways in which it can be clearly seen

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35 De Ver., 26, 3 c (prin.).

36 Ibid., 22, 3 ad 4.

37 S.T., I, 16, 1 c.

that appetency is not cognition. Appetite follows cognition, and that which follows cognition cannot be cognition.<sup>38</sup> The distinction between appetite and cognition is more clearly seen from the fact that the cognition of an object and the inclination for it can be separated. Those things which are distinct need not be separable. Act and potency are distinct but inseparable. But things which can be separated certainly are distinct. And the cognition of an object and the desire for it can be separated. This is clearly seen when an emotion felt toward an object changes while the cognition of it remains the same. When a hungry man sees food, he feels a strong attraction for it. However, as the man starts to eat what has been set before him, his need for food becomes less. If more food is set before a man after his appetite has been satisfied completely, the man no longer wants it. The man sees the same thing which he saw sometime before, but he no longer feels the same attraction toward the food. What delighted him several minutes before now has no appeal for him. The cognition of the object remains the same; the appetite for it has changed.<sup>39</sup>

The act of a finite creature always has a correspond-

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38 S.T., I-II, 35, 1 c.

39 See S.T., I-II, 35, 5 c.

ing potency. Damascene's full definition includes the word virtutis. "Passio est motus appetitivae virtutis sensibilis in imaginatione boni vel mali." Virtus indicates that the act of appetency has a potency, a principle of operation. In fact, appetency is nothing more than the movement of the potency toward its act. There are two kinds of potencies; one is active, the other passive.<sup>40</sup> Active potency is a power of giving perfection; passive potency is the power of receiving perfection.<sup>41</sup> Since a passion by its very name is a reception, the potency of the sensitive appetite must be a passive potency.<sup>42</sup> This passive potency, however, is not a purely passive and inert potency such as prime matter. It is still an operative potency.

The next word to be examined in Damascene's definition is sensibilis. There are several kinds of appetites. The appetency involved in a passion of the soul must be distinguished from other appetitive tendencies. Natural appetite is without cognition. Natural appetite is the movement of a being which does not enjoy cognition toward a good which is proper to it. St. Thomas conceived the proper place for heavy things such as

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<sup>40</sup> "Potentia . . . est enim principium quoddam agendi vel patiendi." In II De Anima, 6, n. 304.

<sup>41</sup> C.G., II, 25 (prin.), Summa Contra Gentiles, Leonine manual ed., Romae, 1934, 111.

<sup>42</sup> De Ver., 25, 1 c (prin.).

rocks to be down in the center of the earth. The natural appetite of a rock, therefore, was an inclination to be carried downward.<sup>43</sup> This downward inclination is without cognition of the end for which the rock is striving. Every being has a determined end. If every creature did not have a determined end, there would be no reason why the being should act one way rather than another.<sup>44</sup> However, different creatures tend toward their respective ends in different ways. The needs of a rock are simple. A rock does not need cognition to discover the place toward which it must tend. An animal, however, has more perfection and needs more things to perfect its nature. The animal needs cognition to discover the things which it needs. Once the animal sees something which is good for it, the sensible appetite urges the animal toward it.<sup>45</sup>

St. Thomas gives another explanation for the existence of different kinds of appetites. Some creatures such as man tend toward their end of themselves. Other creatures are directed toward their goal by another as an arrow is directed toward a determined place by the archer. Creatures that go toward their end of themselves need cognition to determine what their proper

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<sup>43</sup> De Ver., 25, 1 c.

<sup>44</sup> C.G., III, 2 (ad finem).

<sup>45</sup> De Ver., 25, 1 c.

object is. Those beings which have no knowledge of their goal must be directed toward it by another. Beings can be directed toward their end by another in two ways. Sometimes a being is directed toward an end which does not belong to the being in any special way. When this occurs, the being does not acquire a form which is proper to it. Such a movement is contrary to the tendency of the being. In St. Thomas' words, "*Talis inclinatio est violenta.*"<sup>46</sup> It is in this first way that an arrow is directed toward its target. A being can be directed toward its end by another in a second way. This inclination is natural and is put into the being by the one who directs the being toward its end. This happens when someone gives weight to a rock which gives the rock a natural inclination downward. It is in this second way that all creatures which do not enjoy cognition tend toward their end. They have been given an inner principle by the first mover who is God. The cognition of the end of insensible creatures is in God who made the nature. The inner principle gives the beings a natural inclination toward an object which is proper to the being and which will perfect it.

The sense appetite exists in beings that tend toward their end of themselves. This self-directed appetency has two

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<sup>46</sup> *De Ver.*, 22, 1 c (in medio). The body of this article gives a detailed explanation of natural appetite.

subdivisions. One is the sense appetite; the other is the rational appetite. Another Latin word for the sensitive appetite is sensualitas. As St. Thomas tells us, the name for the appetite is derived from the sense cognition which it follows. "Sensualitas nihil aliud esse videtur quam vis appetitiva sensitivae partis: et dicitur sensualitas quasi aliquid a sensu derivatum. . . . In quantum ergo ex appetibili apprehenso per sensum movetur vis appetitiva inferior, ejus motus sensualis dicitur."<sup>47</sup>

The sensitive appetite is the mid-point between the natural appetite and the rational appetite or the will. The sensitive appetite, therefore, must be distinguished from the rational appetite. It is already clear that a bodily change is essential to a passion. The intellectual appetite is essentially independent of any bodily organ. The intellect and its appetite is completely immaterial. No bodily change is involved when the will loves the good.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the appetites are distinguished by their objects. Since the appetites are passive, they are distinguished by the difference in their agents or movers. A sensible good moves the sensitive appetite; an intellectual good moves the rational appetite.<sup>49</sup> The sensible good is particular; the intel-

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<sup>47</sup> De Ver., 25, 1 c (prin.).

<sup>48</sup> S.T., I-II, 22, 3 c.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., I, 80, 2 c.

lectual good is universal.<sup>50</sup> As Thomas says, sensation grasps a colored thing; intellection grasps the nature of the color.

"Sensus est apprehendere hoc coloratum, intellectus autem ipsam naturam coloris."<sup>51</sup>

St. Thomas emphasizes another major distinction between sensitive appetite and intellectual appetite. The appetites are distinguished by the more perfect ways in which they seek their proper objects. As a being becomes more perfect and thus more like to God, it becomes more active and less passive. God, himself, although He is the first mover, cannot be moved in any sense of the word. Beings without cognition are completely passive as they tend toward their proper object. The more perfect beings, which enjoy sense cognition, are more active. Material beings have nothing within them that actively moves them. The natural appetite is an inner principle which gives the being an inclination to be moved by another. A rock has weight which gives the rock a natural inclination to be carried downward by the force of gravity. Animals with sense cognition move themselves in the sense that the intention of the thing within the animal moves the animal toward the desired object. The sense good which has been apprehended and which is in the animal inten-

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51 De Ver., 25, 1 c (ad finem).

50 De Ver., 22, 4 ad 2.

tionally moves the sense appetite. Thus there is something within the animal which is moving it and which makes sense appetite more active than natural appetite. But the animal's inner urge itself is not within the power of the animal. Once the animal sees a good which is pleasureable, it can do nothing but desire the good. On the other hand, man's inclinations are within his power. A rational being can be moved toward a good or not be moved toward a good as he so wishes. The movement of a rational being is relatively free and determined by himself, not by another. Even though a rational being sees a particular good, he need not be moved by it. The will seeks the good in general and is not determined by any particular good.<sup>52</sup>

To sum up, a passion belongs to sense appetency, not natural or rational appetency.

This chapter has almost completely explained Damascene's definition, "Passio est motus appetitivae virtutis sensibilis in imaginatione boni vel mali." The words in imaginatione boni vel mali have not been treated explicitly. However, it is already clear that St. Thomas insists that sense appetite is had only through sense cognition. "Appetibile vero non movet appe-

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52 This whole treatment is taken from De Ver., 22,  
4 c.



titum nisi apprehensum."<sup>53</sup> Good or evil is the object of the passion. The good is that toward which the appetite tends. In fact, good is defined as "quod omnia appetunt."<sup>54</sup>

The concept of a passion of the soul is becoming clearer. A passion is a movement caused by an extrinsic agent. This movement is a strict alteration because a passion is an act of the composite. The bodily changes which accompany a passion mean the acquisition of new forms and the loss of old ones. The movement itself is a stretching out of the appetite toward a good apprehended by sense cognition.

In a passion the act of the soul is an immanent act which perfects the soul, not an extrinsic agent.<sup>55</sup> Everyone has experienced emotions or passions. William James says that nothing is left when we strip an emotion of the perception of the accompanying bodily changes. Although that something may be difficult to describe, we know that there is more to an emotion than bodily changes. This movement of the soul is an inner liking or repulsion for an object. This act is passive, too, in the sense that it is caused by an extrinsic agent. As an immanent act,

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53 De Ver., 25, 1 c (prin.).

54 De Ver., 22, 1 s.c. 2 & c.

55 Cf. S.T., I-II, 31, 5 c; Ibid., 74, 1 c.

however, the change involved in a passion differs from a reception in an inanimate being. The influence of the agent is received into a vital activity of the soul. This vital activity is not the perception of the bodily changes but the very like or dislike itself of the object of the passion.

After the explanation of a passion which has been given in this chapter, the definition itself can be stated briefly. A passion of the soul is at the same time an immaterial and a bodily movement of the sense appetite toward a good or away from an evil. This definition of passion will yield a clearer insight into the nature of a particular passion, sadness.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS SADNESS?

The hero strikes out with the bases loaded; a business fails; a mother loses her son in the war. The effect of all of these is sadness. Everyone has direct and immediate knowledge of sadness. There is no need to explain what sadness is to a mother who has lost her son. She knows. What this chapter intends to yield is not an experimental knowledge of sadness, but a philosophical knowledge, a knowledge of the essence of sadness acquired through reflection on our immediate experience. However, since the aim of this work is always to give the essence of sadness according to St. Thomas, the search for a definition of sadness will not be an independent one, but one based directly on the text of St. Thomas.

Thomas affirms that sadness is not only a passion, but a principal passion. The principal passions are those which precede the others and are their source. Good and evil are the objects of the passions, and joy or sorrow immediately follows contact with good or evil. The other passions follow these basic passions. For example, evil becomes something to be hated only

because it is recognized as something which causes sadness.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, sadness is a passion in the strictest sense of the word. Sadness takes precedence even over joy. As has been seen, a passion properly involves the loss of a contrary form. A man who casts off his sickness and acquires health experiences a passion since sickness is a form which is contrary to health. However, in the strictest use of the word a passion occurs only when a form which is proper to the subject is lost. When a man rids himself of sickness, he is not losing a form which is proper to him. When a man loses his health, which is proper to him, then he suffers a passion in the strictest sense. Thus a passion is had more properly when the change is for the worse. In this way, sadness is a passion in a more proper sense than joy is.<sup>2</sup>

Potency as such is essentially ordained to act. Because of this essential ordination, the potency can be known only from the act to which it is ordained. Thus the nature of any particular potency is ascertained by learning the act to which it is ordained. When there is question of an operative potency, its act will have an object, and the object will determine and specify the nature of the act. The sense appetite is a potency of

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1 De Ver., 26, 5; S.T., I-II, 25, 4.

2 S.T., I-II, 25, 4; De Ver., 26, 5.

the soul which is ordained to the act of appetency, and this act has as its object the sensible good which is to be attained. Since the attainment of the sensible good may present some difficulty, the sensible good to be attained may be considered under two aspects: the sensible good itself, and the difficulty or arduousness of its attainment. Consequently, the sense appetite, being determined by its object, the sensible good, also has two aspects or parts. When the sense appetite has good or evil as such as its object, the concupiscible appetite begins to operate. The irascible appetite is called into action when the tending of the appetite is directed toward a good or an evil considered under the aspect of its arduousness of attainment. Thus the function of the irascible appetite is to overcome any difficulty which might be necessary to acquire a good or flee an evil. Anger, for example, is an irascible passion because it helps the subject to avoid a difficult evil. Since sadness simply looks to evil as such, sadness does not have the aspect of arduousness as its object. Sadness, therefore, is a concupiscible passion, not an irascible one.<sup>3</sup>

Sadness must be distinguished from the other species of passion in order that a distinct and precise concept of sadness

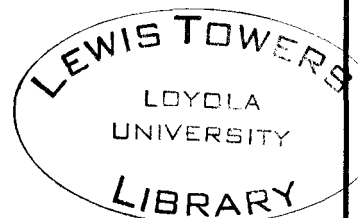
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3 S.T., I-II, 23, 1; De Ver., 25, 2 c.

may be obtained. Since an operative potency is distinguished by its object, the passions differ as the agents which are their objects differ. Agents can differ either according to their nature or according to the different ways in which they act on the patient. The first chapter has already discussed the ways in which the agent can exert influence on the patient.<sup>4</sup> The agent can give the patient a certain inclination to tend toward the good. Thus the agent makes the patient well-disposed toward the good and gives it a certain affinity with the good. This leaning of the patient toward the good is the passion love. If the agent is an evil, it can cause a certain incompatibility between the appetite and the evil object. This repulsion of the appetite from the evil is called hate. If the good is not yet possessed, the agent can cause a movement of the appetite toward the object. This movement of the appetite toward the possession of the good is called desire or concupiscence. On the other hand, if the agent is evil, it can cause aversion or dislike of the appetite for the object. This turning away of the appetite from evil is called aversion. The agent can cause a certain restful relishing of the appetite in the good once the good is possessed. This restful relishing of the good is called delight or joy. The

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter I, p. 8.



agent can cause a certain dissatisfaction or discomfort of the appetite in the presence of evil if the object is evil and in actual contact with the subject. This dissatisfaction or discomfort of the appetite when confronted with a present evil is called sorrow or sadness.

The irascible passions presuppose the inclination to obtain the good or the urge to flee evil produced by the concupiscible passions. Hope, for example, supposes desire or concupiscence. However, although desire looks to a future good absolutely, hope deals with the arduousness of obtaining a future good. Thus hope is a movement of the appetite toward a difficult, future good which is sought as something not impossible to acquire. Despair is the opposite of hope. Despair is the repulsion of the appetite from a difficult, future good considered impossible to acquire. Courage attacks difficult evil to overcome it. Fear is the fleeing of the appetite from a difficult, future evil which cannot be overcome. If the difficult evil object is actually present, anger moves to punish the evil which has attacked the subject.

Excepting anger (ira), the passions always come in pairs. For the concupiscible passions, this pairing off is due to the objects of the passions, good and evil. Love (amor) is an attraction of the appetite toward the good; the repulsion of

the appetite from evil is called hate (odium). The movement of the appetite toward the acquisition of the good not possessed is called desire or concupiscence (desiderium); aversion or dislike (fuga) is the turning of the appetite from evil. Joy (gaudium) is the resting of the appetite in the good; sorrow or sadness (tristitia) is the dissatisfaction of the appetite in the presence of evil. Hope (spes) considers a difficult future good as attainable; despair (desperatio) considers the difficult future good as unattainable. Courage (audacia) attacks a difficult future evil; fear (timor) flees a difficult future evil.<sup>5</sup>

Knowing the general divisions and subdivisions of the passions, we can distinguish sadness more easily now from the other species of the passions. Sadness has evil for its object. It can be easily distinguished, therefore, from all species of the passions which have good as their object such as love, desire, joy, hope, and despair. Sadness has a present evil as its object. It can be easily distinguished, therefore, from all species of the passions which look to the future such as hope, despair, courage, and fear. Sadness does not consider the arduousness of avoiding the evil. Thus it is easily distinguished from fear and anger. Like sadness, anger has a present evil as

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<sup>5</sup> The treatment of the species of the passions was based primarily on S.T., I-II, 23, 4 c.



its object. Unlike sadness, anger attacks the difficulty of the present evil as able to be overcome.<sup>6</sup> Sadness succumbs to the present evil.<sup>7</sup> In brief, sadness has evil for its object, not good; a present evil, not a future evil; and evil considered absolutely, not the arduousness of overcoming the evil.

St. Thomas compares delight and sadness to the affirmation and denial of the intellect. As an affirmation assents to that which is true, so delight clings to that which is good. As a denial does not agree to falsehood, so sadness retreats from evil.<sup>8</sup> Sadness is the opposite of delight. Delight accepts that which the appetite possesses. Sadness is fleeing, as it were, the evil with which the appetite is in contact.<sup>9</sup> The appetite has not yet started to flee from the evil. Once the appetite starts the motion away from the evil, the subject experiences the passion aversion which Thomas calls fuga in Latin. Sadness is in actual contact with evil, but it looks on evil as a termi-

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6 De Ver., 26, 4 c (in medio).

7 S.T., I-II, 23, 3 c.

8 "Intellectus enim in iudicando habet duos actus scilicet affirmationem, qua assentit vero, et negationem qua dissentit a falso. Quibus duobus respondent duo proportionabiliter in vi appetitiva; scilicet prosecutio qua appetitus tendit in bonum et inhaeret ei et fuga qua recedit a malo et dissentit ei." In VI Ethicorum, 2, n. 1128, ed. Pirotta<sup>rev</sup>, R.M. Spiazzi, Turin, 1949, 310. Elsewhere St. Thomas tells us that sadness pertains to flight.

9 S.T., I-II, 35, 4 ad 2.

nus a quo.<sup>10</sup> Like hate, sadness makes the subject ill-disposed toward the evil.

With these preliminary notions of sadness, we can now examine tristitia to see whether or not it fulfils the notion of passion. A passion of the soul was defined as a movement, at once bodily and immaterial, of the sense appetite toward a good or away from an evil. Sadness has evil for its object, and the evil is known through sense cognition.<sup>11</sup> Certainly there is an immaterial movement of the sense appetite away from the evil. This immaterial movement was described in the preceding paragraph. When someone is sad, he is in actual contact with evil; but he wishes that he were not in such a plight. When the hero strikes out with the bases loaded, the fans are sad. The evil which they hated and tried to avoid is now a reality. The immaterial potency of the sense appetite finds itself agitated and in a state of dissatisfaction.

Is sadness also a bodily movement away from the evil? Does the body protest against the evil, too? Not only does St. Thomas affirm that an adverse bodily change occurs in sadness, but he even insists that sadness harms the body more than any other passion. Thomas considered human life to consist in a cer-

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10 S.T., I-II, 23, 2 c.

11 Ibid., 35, 1 c.

tain motion from the heart to the other members of the body.

"Consistit enim humana vita in quadam motione, quae a corde in cetera membra diffunditur: quae quidem motio convenit naturae humanae secundum aliquam determinatam mensuram."<sup>12</sup> All the passions which consist in a movement toward a good do not stop this vital flow or motion but rather stimulate the movement as long as the passion is moderate. If the passion becomes immoderate, the body can be harmed by these passions, too. But some passions slow down or restrict this vital motion of their very nature. Fear and despair, for example, stop this vital motion because they consist in a flight or withdrawal from evil. However, sadness weighs down the soul more than fear or despair because the evil is actually present and makes a stronger impression than an evil which is yet to come. Sadness slows down bodily movement in general by constricting the heart which is the principle of motion in the body.<sup>13</sup> Just as the sensitive appetite shrinks when confronted with evil, so the heart contracts and slows down when

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<sup>12</sup> S.T., I-II, 37, 4 c. Thomas was not familiar with all the findings of modern science, but this vital motion from the heart would seem to be similar to the circulation of the blood which supplies the organs of the body with the food that they need.

<sup>13</sup> S.T., III, 84, 9 ad 2.

the subject encounters evil.<sup>14</sup>

Thomas has often been criticised for being woefully backward and naive in matters of natural science. But it would hardly be fair to expect St. Thomas to have as vast a knowledge of natural science as an age six centuries later which has stressed the material to the neglect of the immaterial. As it is, Thomas' description of the bodily change in sadness does not differ essentially from the description of a more modern expert, William James.<sup>15</sup> The bodily changes in James' description are

<sup>14</sup> John of St. Thomas also considers the bodily change in sadness to be a constriction of the heart. See Joannis A Sancto Thoma, O.P., Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus, ed. Reiser, Taurini, 1930, I, 815, 34 b.

<sup>15</sup> William James gives a very interesting and complete description of the bodily changes which occur during sadness. His description is taken from the Danish physiologist, C. Lange.

"The chief feature in the physiognomy of grief is perhaps its paralysing effect on the voluntary movements. . . . His voice is weak and without resonance, in consequence of the feeble activity of the muscles of expiration and of the larynx. . . . The tonicity or 'latent innervation' of the muscles is strikingly diminished. The neck is bent, the head hangs 'bowed down' with grief, the relaxation of the cheek and jaw muscles makes the face look long and narrow, the jaw may even hang open. The eyes appear large as is always the case where the orbicularis muscle is paralyzed, but they may often be partly covered by the upper lid which droops in consequence of the laming of its own levator. . . . Another side . . . belongs . . . to the involuntary or 'organic' muscles, especially those which are found in the walls of the blood-vessels, and the use of which is, by contracting, to diminish the latter's calibre. . . . Instead of being paralyzed, . . . the vascular muscles are more strongly contracted than usual, so that the tissues and organs of the body become anaemic. . . . The mouth grows dry, the tongue sticky, and a bitter taste ensues which, it would appear is only a consequence of the

certainly adverse. There is a general constriction and cessation of movement. Since Thomas considered the heart as the source of all movement in an animal,<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas and Dr. Lange agree that sadness involves a general restriction of bodily activities.

A definition of sadness can now be formulated. Sadness is a passion of the soul consisting in a shrinking of the sense appetite in the presence of evil and entailing a constriction of the heart. In sadness, the appetitive potency is in actual contact with a privation of the good which is its end or proper object. This is bound to bring dissatisfaction and emptiness to the appetite. Sadness is a movement (motus) in the strict sense, for there is a gradual alteration in the body, and for the worse. There is also an immaterial movement of the sense appetite away

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tongue's dryness. [The expression 'bitter sorrow' may possibly arise from this.] In nursing women the milk diminishes or altogether dries up. One of the most regular manifestations of grief [is] . . . weeping, with its profuse secretion of tears, its swollen reddened face, red eyes, and augmented secretion from the nasal mucous membrane. . . . If the smaller vessels of the lungs contract so that these organs become anaemic, we have (as is usual under such conditions) the feeling of insufficient breath, and of oppression of the chest, and these tormenting sensations increase the sufferings of the griever, who seeks relief by long-drawn sighs, instinctively, like every one who lacks breath from whatever cause." Dr. C. Lange, Ueber Gemuthsbewegungen, uebersetzt von H. Kurella, Leipzig, 1887. Quoted in William James, Principles of Psychology, II, 443-445.

16 S.T., I, 20, 1, ad 1.

from the evil.<sup>17</sup> Thus sadness is a passion in two ways. In the first place, the object causes a gradual, bodily alteration in the patient. Secondly, the sentient being is affected adversely by the agent and the appetite reacts against this. As is the case in all passions, these changes are due to the influence of the agent or object.

There are two Latin words which Thomas uses to denote what this thesis has called the passion sadness. One of these words is tristitia; the other dolor. There seems to be a progression in St. Thomas' doctrine on the use of these words. In the De Veritate, an earlier work, St. Thomas states that dolor is not a passion, but belongs to the sense of touch. "Dolor, secundum quod proprie accipitur, non debet computari inter animae passiones, quia nihil habet ex parte animae nisi apprehensionem tantum; est enim dolor sensus laesionis: quae quidem laesio est ex parte corporis."<sup>18</sup>

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17 Cardinal Cajetan also separates the immaterial movement of the appetite from the material change:

"Cum enim, secluso corpore, pati consistat in recipere ab agente et trahi in illud, (omne enim agens, assimilando sibi patiens, trahit illud ad se) et pars apprehensiva minus trahatur ad agens quam pars appetitiva: consequens est quod passionis communiter dictae magis habeat rationem pars appetitiva quam apprehensiva." In S.T., I-II, 22, 2 c, Opera Omnia S. Thomae de Aquino, Leonine ed., VI, 170 a. The italics are not in the original.

18 De Ver., 26, 4 ad 4.

St. Thomas also describes tristitia as a passio animalis and dolor as a passio corporalis. Passio animalis or "psychical passion," begins in the knowledge of something harmful and ends in an operation of the appetite and further in the bodily change. Psychical passion has sense appetency as an intrinsic ingredient. From this same act of appetency a bodily change issues. A psychical passion directly changes the body and is the act of the bodily organ. For it is through the operation of the appetitive potency that the heart, the organ of the appetite, is properly disposed. The heart is the principle of motion in the body, and once the heart has been influenced by the psychical passion, it moves the body to possess the object toward which the sensitive appetite is inclined.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, a bodily passion is primarily in the body and affects the soul only indirectly and secondarily. Passio corporalis can be connected with the potencies of the soul in three ways. All potencies of the soul have their roots in the essence of the soul. In this way, a bodily passion can be attributed to all potencies of the soul because of their intimate interconnection. Body and soul form an unum per se; and the soul is the form of all the bodily powers as well as of the spiritual powers. A bodily passion is also connected with any potency using a bodily organ because any injury to the body

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19 De Ver., 26, 3 c.

impedes the operation of the faculty. In this same way, a bodily passion is connected with intellectual potencies because the intellect needs the phantasm in order to operate. Thirdly, passio corporalis pertains to the potency which cognizes the bodily injury, the power which is called the sense of touch. Because of these interconnections the soul can experience bodily passion, but only because it suffers with the body, which is the real subject of the passion. Thus the body undergoes the bodily passion; the sense of touch cognizes the injury; but the soul is affected only indirectly. Dolor (which here would mean pain) is a bodily passion for dolor "incipit a laesione corporis, et terminatur in apprehensione sensus tactus, propter quod dolor est in sensu tactus, ut in apprehendente."<sup>20</sup> In the De Veritate, therefore, St. Thomas says that dolor is a passio corporalis and belongs to a power of cognition, the sense of touch. This means that dolor would not be a passion in the strict sense since cognition is not strictly a passion.

In his more mature work St. Thomas affirms that dolor definitely belongs to the appetite and not only to the power of cognition. "Dolor, secundum quod est in appetitu sensitivo, propriissime dicitur passio animae."<sup>21</sup> In the same article St. Tho-

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20 De Ver., 26, 3 ad 9.

21 S.T., I-II, 35, 1 c.



mas says that dolor is always in the soul. Dolor is said to belong to the body only because the bodily injury is the cause of grief. In the De Veritate Thomas connected a passio corporalis with the soul only indirectly or else as belonging to the sense of touch. That there has been a change in doctrine is indicated by the different ways in which St. Thomas handles precisely the same quotation from St. Augustine. In discussing the responsibility of the body and the soul respectively for vice, St. Augustine makes his own distinction between dolor and tristitia. "De tristitia vero, quam Cicero magis aegritudinem appellat, dolorem autem Virgilius, ubi ait, 'Dolent gaudentque,' (sed ideo malui tristitiam dicere, quia aegritudo vel dolor usitatus in corporibus dicitur.)"<sup>22</sup> In the De Veritate St. Thomas uses this quotation to support his teaching that dolor is a bodily passion which belongs to the sense of touch.<sup>23</sup> In the Summa one article is devoted to showing that tristitia is simply a species of dolor. When the very same quotation from St. Augustine is given as an objection, Thomas gives a different answer. Here St. Thomas says that St. Augustine is only talking about the way in which the word is used. Since bodily afflictions are better known than

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22 St. Aurelius Augustine, De Civitate Dei, 14, 6, (in fine). Contained in Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus, Vol. 41, ed. Migne, Paris, 1900, 411a.

23 De Ver., 26, 3 ad 9.

spiritual sorrows, dolor is used more often for bodily grief.<sup>24</sup>

Thus in the Summa the bodily injury perceived by the sense of touch is not dolor but the object and motive for dolor. Both tristitia and dolor are in the sensitive appetite. The difference between the two lies in their object.

Sicut autem dolor sensibilis est in appetitu sensitivo, ita et tristitia; sed est differentia secundum motivum, sive objectum. Nam objectum et motivum doloris est laesio sensu tactus percepta; sicut cum aliquis vulneratur. Objectum autem et motivum tristitiae est nocivum seu malum interius apprehensum, sive per rationem sive per imaginationem, sicut in Secunda Parte habitum est; sicut cum aliquis tristatur de amissione gratiae vel pecuniae.<sup>25</sup>

St. Thomas makes the same distinction in the Prima Secundae. Dolor follows the cognition of the exterior sense; tristitia follows the cognition of the interior sense. Dolor, however, is the genus; tristitia is the species. Dolor could be applied to the reaction of the appetite after cognition either by the exterior sense or by the interior sense. Tristitia is never applied to the appetite which follows the exterior sense. The latter is used only after cognition by the interior sense, or by the intellect.<sup>26</sup> For the most part, this whole discussion is simply a matter of a wide and a strict use of words. Perhaps St.

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24 S.T., I-II, 35, 2 ad 1.

25 Ibid., III, 15, 6 c.

26 Ibid., I-II, 35, 2.

Thomas insists in the Summa that dolor belongs to the appetite as well as to cognition because cognition is objective and tells us about the object. Dolor, on the other hand, seems to be subjective; for it tells the subject that the object is evil in relation to it.<sup>27</sup>

Following St. John Damascene, St. Thomas distinguishes four species of sadness. These four are not species in the strict sense. Strictly a species is constituted by an addition to the genus. This addition can take place in two ways. When that which is added is contained potentially in the genus, as rational is contained in animal, the addition is a true species of the genus. Sometimes, however, something is added to the genus which does not belong to the notion of genus even potentially. It is in this second way that the species of sadness are derived. There are species of sadness only because the notion of sadness is applied to something which is extrinsic to it. This application is made because there is some relation between sadness and that to which it is applied. This relation would be that of cause and effect. The proper object of sadness is an evil to

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27 Mr. Richard R. Baker treats this matter from the opposite direction. Mr. Baker starts with the Summa and goes back to the De Veritate. Although he comes to no definite conclusion, Mr. Baker seems to think dolor does belong to the sense of touch. "This interpretation is more in accord with the judgment of most modern psychologists." See Thomistic Theory of the Passions, Notre Dame, 1941, 68-73.

oneself. An evil that happens to another is not the proper object of tristitia. However, another's evil can be considered as an evil to oneself, and the species misericordia is formed. Pity or compassion is sadness over another's evil. Sometimes the object is neither an evil to another nor one's own evil, but someone else's good. Another's good is considered as one's own evil, however. Thus the species invidia is formed. Envy is sadness over the good of another. If the sadness arises because of the prosperity of evil men, the species is called indignation (nemesis); but the object is the same, the good of another.<sup>28</sup>

The proper effect of sadness is a certain fleeing of the appetite away from the evil. If the possibility of this effect of sadness is removed, a species of sadness is formed which is called anxietas or angustia. Anxiety or distress is sadness because there seems to be no escape from the evil. Another effect of sadness is the slowing down of the voluntary and involuntary movements of the body. If this immobilization is complete, the species acedia is formed. Boredom or sloth is such an immobilization of the exterior members of the body that work becomes impossible. In special cases of acedia even the power to speak is

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28 In III Sent., 15, 1, 3.

lost.<sup>29</sup>

Sadness has been defined as a passion of the soul consisting in a shrinking of the sense appetite in the presence of evil and entailing a constriction of the heart. This definition tells us that dolor and tristitia refer primarily to acts of the sense appetite. At this point, an interesting question presents itself. Is tristitia used only for sadness in the sense appetite or also for a similar emotion in the will? More than once St. Thomas tells us that tristitia and dolor follow not only sense cognition but also rational cognition.<sup>30</sup> St. Thomas has already established that sadness is properly in the sensitive appetite.

Passio vero animalis, cum per eam ex operatione animae transmutetur corpus, in illa potentia esse debet quae organo corporali adjungitur, et cujus est corpus transmutare; et ideo hujusmodi passio non est in parte intellectiva, quae non est alicujus organi corporalis actus . . . Et sic in appetitiva sensitiva sola, animalis passio proprie invenitur."<sup>31</sup>

If sadness belongs to the sense appetite, in what way can tristitia be applied to a higher emotion in the will?

Catholics are quite familiar with the notion of repentance or sorrow for sins. But a man can grieve over any act he

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29 For the whole treatment of the species of the passions see S.T., I-II, 35, 8; also De Ver., 26, 4 ad 6.

30 S.T., I-II, 35, 2 c and 7 c; S.T., III, 15, 6 c.

31 De Ver., 26, 3 c ( ad finem ).

did in the past, whether the act be sinful or simply some fault or mistake. On a sense level, repentance is simply a form of sadness. Poenitentia is not even a separate species of sadness, for the object of repentance is an evil to oneself.<sup>32</sup> St. Thomas explicitly states that poenitentia is a passion of the soul.

"Poenitere est de aliquo a se prius facto dolere. . . . Dolor vel tristitia dupleiter dicitur. Uno modo, secundum quod est passio quaedam appetitus sensitivi. Et quantum ad hoc, poenitentia non est virtus, sed passio."<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, immoral acts are only apparent goods which are improper means to man's end. Moral evil can be known only by the intellect. Sorrow for immoral acts cannot follow sense cognition. Thus there must be another type of repentance which is in the will, and St. Thomas soon affirms this.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, St. Thomas states that dolor interior is greater than dolor exterior because the evil is known more perfectly when the likeness in the intellect is more immaterial and abstract. Since appetency in animals depends upon cognition, more perfect knowledge will mean a higher emotion.<sup>35</sup>

Since sadness is a passion when it is considered prop-

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32 S.T., I-II, 35, 8, ad 2.

33 S.T., III, 85, 1 c.

34 Ibid., III, 85, 1 c.

35 Ibid., I-II, 7 ad 2.

erly, St. Thomas is reluctant to call an act of the intellectual appetite sadness. He does admit, however, that sometimes sadness is said to be in the intellectual appetite. This manner of speaking does not consider the act of the intellect in recognizing evil for the knowing of evil is a good to the intellect. When sadness is said to be in the intellectual part of the soul, it is because the intellect has discovered an evil which is harmful to man and which is repugnant to his will.<sup>36</sup>

Eight centuries before St. Thomas, St. Augustine had said that tristitia was an act of the will. Since St. Thomas quotes part of this passage rather frequently, a first-hand inspection of it might be valuable.

Interest autem qualis sit voluntas hominis: quia si perversa est, perversos habebit hos motus. . . . Voluntas est quippe in omnibus: imo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt. Nam quid est cupiditas et laetitia, nisi voluntas in eorum consensionem quae volumus? Et quid est metus atque tristitia, nisi voluntas in dissensionem ab his quae nolumus? . . . Cum autem dissentimus ab eo quod nolentibus accidit, talis voluntas tristitia est.<sup>37</sup>

Thus St. Augustine equates joy and sadness with willing and not willing. When the will does not want an evil which is repugnant to it, the will's act is called sadness. St. Thomas recognizes

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36 De Ver., 26, 3 ad 6.

37 St. Aurelius Augustine, De Civitate Dei, XIV, 6, contained in Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus, Vol. 41, 410 a.

the existence of this type of act but does not call it a passion or sadness in the strict sense. Tristitia is applied to this act of the will only because this act is similar to the passion or emotion of sadness. The act of the will has no direct connection with any bodily movement. The act of the will is no emotion since there is no motus in the strict sense. The will is free and more active than a passion is.<sup>38</sup> Objects do please or displease the will, though, and these acts of pleasure or displeasure can be called sadness. "Alio modo loqui possumus de gaudio et tristitia secundum quod consistunt in simplici actu voluntatis, cui aliquid placet vel displicet."<sup>39</sup>

In treating of the fallen angels—whose existence Thomas knows through scripture—Thomas makes a few statements which throw more light on the type of sadness which resides in the will. In view of the fact that angels are immaterial beings, St. Thomas logically concludes that angels cannot get angry or have any passions whatsoever in the strict sense. However, angels can be envious; and, as has been seen, envy is a species of sadness. Thomas explains the origin of the angels' envy in this manner. The affections try to avoid a certain type of object for the same

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38 De Ver., 22, 4 c. "Et sic recedens [voluntas] a natura mobilis, accedit ad naturam moventis et agentis."

39 S.T., III, 84, 9 ad 2.



reason that they tend toward its opposite. Since the fallen angels are proud, they consider the good of another as working against their own good. The angels want to be the most excellent beings; they grieve over any good fortune of man. The good of another is considered as contrary to their own will, and thus the fallen angels are "sad" and "envious." The will of the fallen angel is trying to work against the good of man.<sup>40</sup>

If angels cannot have passions in the strict sense, much less can God experience a passion. Passions of the sensitive appetite have two elements, one material, the other formal. The material element in anger is the heating of the blood around the heart. The formal element in anger is the punishing of the difficult evil which has attacked the subject. Like the angels, God has no body. The material element in a passion is contrary to His immaterial nature. Unlike the angels, God is pure act and has no imperfection of any kind. As has been seen, the angels can experience in a wide sense the formal element of envy. In God, however, not even the formal element of a passion can be present if that formal element implies an imperfection. The material element of sadness is the constriction of the heart. God does not have a bodily organ. The formal element of sadness is the shrinking of the appetite from an evil it possesses. No evil

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<sup>40</sup> S.T., I, 63, 2 c.

can affect God for this would be an imperfection. There can be no imperfection in God.<sup>41</sup>

Although the material element of a passion can never be applied to God and the formal element can be applied only if it contains no imperfection, passions are sometimes attributed to God. The formal element of love is applied to God since God has a will which by definition tends toward the good.<sup>42</sup> The formal element of love (amor) contains no imperfection. Passions that contain the notion of imperfection can be attributed to God only metaphorically. Anger presupposes sadness over an injury received. Anger seeks to punish the attacking, difficult evil. God is pure act. No evil can touch God, and nothing is difficult for Him. But God is said to be angry metaphorically because there is a likeness in the effects of anger and in the effects of God's justice. Just as a man can punish evil action in anger, God can punish evil action in His justice. The metaphor is metonymy "in which a word is used for another which it suggests or which is closely associated with it."<sup>43</sup> Here angry is used for just because both are closely associated with punishment. It is

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<sup>41</sup> This paragraph is based on S.T., I, 20, 1 ad 2.

<sup>42</sup> S.T., I, 20, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Michael P. Kammer and Charles W. Mulligan, Writing Handbook, Chicago, 1953, 446.

in this metaphorical fashion that God is said to be sad. God is sad because some things happen which are contrary to that which He loves and approves. It is in this same sense that Augustine and Thomas affirm that sadness is in the human will. In a strict sense, neither the act of God's will nor the act of man's will is a passion.

Repentance is nothing but a form of sadness. God is said to be repentant, too, but only metaphorically. According to the unchangeable order of divine providence, God sometimes makes what He has previously destroyed or destroys what He had previously made. However, these changes are in time and on the part of creatures. God causes these effects by one eternal, immutable act of His own. God is said to be repentant because the effect of His act of creation is similar to the effect of the act of a repentant man.<sup>44</sup>

Misericordia is a species of sadness. St. Thomas tells us that a compassionate man has a miserum cor. When the compassionate man sees another in misery, he is sad because the merciful man considers another's evil as his own. God cannot be merciful in the strict sense because no evil can affect God. Nevertheless, God is said to be merciful metaphorically because the

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<sup>44</sup> The attribution of passions to God in a metaphorical fashion is found in the Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 91, (ad finem).

effect of God's goodness is similar to the effect of mercy or compassion in man. The compassionate man strives to drive away the evil which is afflicting someone else. God's goodness and liberality have the same effect.<sup>45</sup>

This discussion has clarified somewhat the notion of sadness. The definition of dolor and tristitia should now be clear. Sadness is a passion of the soul consisting in a shrinking of the sense appetite in the presence of evil and entailing a constriction of the heart.

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<sup>45</sup> S.T., I, 21, 3 c.

### CHAPTER III

#### CAUSES, EFFECTS, AND REMEDIES OF SADNESS

The essence of sadness has now been given. Other fundamental questions remain concerning sadness. What causes sadness? What follows from sadness? How can sadness be remedied? This chapter will try to answer these basic questions.

As has been seen, there are two important factors in any passion. Without an object to seek, the subject cannot experience a passion. Without a subject to seek it, a good will not produce a passion. A passion needs both a subject and an object in order to exist. When the search for the cause of sadness is begun, both the subject and the object must be inspected.

First we shall consider the object. What type of causality does it exert in producing a passion? Could the object be called an efficient cause? An efficient cause produces the effect. Since there is no passion or emotion without an object and always one once an object has been presented, the object does produce the effect and can be considered as an efficient cause.<sup>1</sup>

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1 De Ver., 25, 1 c (prin.).

This holds true even though that which is produced is not an external physical reality but an immanent operation.

Moreover, anything which causes the object of sadness is itself also an efficient cause. Since the object is a cause of sadness, any external agent which exerts any type of causality on the object indirectly causes the passion. Thomas tells us the reason for this. The objects of the passions are like the forms of natural things. Since whatever causes the form of a thing causes the thing itself, whatever causes the object of a passion causes the passion.<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas states that this is why St. Augustine says that a power greater than the soul is the cause of a passion.<sup>3</sup> Naturally, the appetite does not want the evil with which it is in contact. That which is contrary to the tendency of the subject does not become united to it except through the action of a greater power since the subject does not reach out for that which is repugnant to it. Only an extrinsic agent would

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2 S.T., I-II, 43, 1 c. "Respondeo dicendum quod objecta passionum animae se habent ad eas tamquam formae ad res naturales vel artificiales: quia passiones animae speciem recipiunt ab objectis, sicut res praedictae a suis formis. Sicut igitur quidquid est causa formae, est causa rei constitutae per ipsam, ita etiam quidquid, et quocumque modo, est causa objecti, est causa passionis."

3 De Natura Boni Contra Manichaeos, I, 20, contained in Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus, Vol. 42, 557 a. "In anima ergo dolorem facit sensus resistens potestati majori: in corpore dolorem facit sensus resistens corpori potentiori."

bring an evil object into contact with the subject. On the other hand, if the subject did not resist the action of the greater power, joining the object to the subject would not cause sadness. If the subject wanted to be affected by the greater power, only delight would follow. If a young boy were enjoying himself, he would not like being carried to bed. However, if the young boy did not mind being taken to bed, he would not be glum but joyful.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, a cause greater than the resisting soul is the efficient cause of a passion, too.

Can the object also be considered as the formal cause? The sense appetite is in the soul as a determination of the soul in regard to an operation, and therefore with reference to the soul is a form and an act. It is, however, a potency with reference to its operation. It becomes the subject of the operation, and thus is a material cause in this relationship. And even prior to the operation it must receive, through the apprehensive powers, the determination of the object. Thus the apprehended object formally specifies the power and has the role of formal cause, and the power (the sense appetite) has the role of material cause.

Thus the object can be considered as a formal cause as well as an efficient cause. Is the object also a final cause?

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<sup>4</sup> See S.T., I-II, 36, 4.

Sadness has been defined as the shrinking of the sense appetite in the presence of evil. Obviously, without evil there would be no reason to be sad. The appetite would not reject and refuse the object unless it were evil. Experience tells us that when evil is present, man is sad. When no evil is present, man is not sad. As the evil becomes greater, the sadness becomes greater.<sup>5</sup> These tests show that evil is a cause of sadness. The nature of this causality needs further elucidation.

When the object of a passion is a good, there is no difficulty in seeing that the object is a final cause of the passion. It is for the sake of the good that something comes into being or that an agent is moved. Since the good is the object of the appetite, it is obvious that the object is a final cause of the movement of the appetite.<sup>6</sup> Evil, however, is a privation;<sup>7</sup> and although the privation is an actual fact, the evil itself has no positive being, but is only conceived as such by the mind.<sup>8</sup> How can evil perfect the appetite or be a final cause? Nothing seeks evil as such. Experience has testified that evil is a cause of sadness. Nevertheless, when the nature of this cause is

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<sup>5</sup> For the latter see S.T., III, 46, 6 c; also In III Sent., 15, 2, 3, 3.

<sup>6</sup> S.T., I, 5, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 48, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 48, 2 ad 2; I-II, 36, 1 c.



examined, it seems to lose its power to cause. Thomas tells us that evil does not cause anything of itself but only by reason of the good which accompanies the evil.<sup>9</sup> No man seeks evil but the good which accompanies it. This does not answer the present difficulty, however, since the object of sadness is precisely the evil which accompanies the good, not the good which accompanies the evil. In reality a being exists which is good but not as good as it ought to be. The goodness of this being is not the object of sadness, for goodness causes joy. It is precisely the evil which is joined with the good which is the object and cause of sadness.<sup>10</sup> Yet how can evil as such cause anything?

First, it is good to remember that, just as the object of appetite in general is not merely the good, but the apprehended good, so the object of sadness is not simply evil as if it were a physical reality (for evil has no physical reality) but evil as apprehended. It is not simply a physically existing evil which is the object of sadness but the apprehended evil. It might be difficult—it would even be impossible—to explain how a real external evil could cause a real external positive reality; but it is not difficult to see how an apprehended evil

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9 S.T., I, 48, 1 ad 4.

10 Ibid., I-II, 36, 1 c.

can cause a state or movement in the soul which apprehends it.

Evil borrows the notion of a final cause from the good. Nothing seeks evil in itself, but the appetite does shrink from evil for the same reason that the appetite seeks the good.<sup>11</sup> Since the appetite accepts the good, it must reject evil. If the appetite did not seek the good, it would not be dissatisfied with evil. The object of sadness, then, is reduced to the genus of final cause since "opposita sunt circa idem."<sup>12</sup> This holds true even though the object of sadness is evil. Rather it is because the object is evil that the appetite reacts as it does.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, the object plays an important role in producing a passion. But the subject is also responsible for the passion. If the subject were not a cause of the passion, the same object would produce a uniform passion in all subjects. This is not the case. The more sensitive the subject is, the greater is the sorrow or grief. St. Thomas uses this fact to prove that Christ suffered more than any other human being.

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11 S.T., I, 63, 2 c.

12 Ibid., 17, 1 c; see also In X Met., 10, n. 2122. "Contraria sunt in eodem genere."

13 See S.T., I-II, 35, 6 c. "Bonum, quod est obiectum delectationis, propter seipsum appetitur: malum autem, quod est obiectum tristitiae, est fugiendum inquantum est privatio boni." See also In V Met., 1, n. 762. "Bonum enim quod habet rationem finis in prosequendo, et malum in vitando in multis sunt principia cognitionis et motus, sicut in omnibus quae aguntur propter finem."

Christ's powers of perception were greater, and so the sorrow which followed that perception was greater.<sup>14</sup>

As has been stated, the object of a passion is in some respect its final, efficient, and formal cause. The sense appetite of the subject is the material cause. A material cause is the subject, that in which a perfection is received.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, it is in the passive potency of the sense appetite that the passion occurs thus making the sense appetite the material cause of sadness. The subjective disposition of the appetite determines whether or not the object will be a good or an evil in relationship to the subject.<sup>16</sup>

Thomas compares the causes of a passion to the causes of the natural appetite. A lower place is the final cause of the descent of a heavy body, but the inner principle of motion is the natural inclination downward. The present evil is the final cause of sadness, but the material cause of a passion is the inner inclination of the appetite. It is because of its natural

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14 S.T., III, 46, 6 c.

15 Ibid., I, 105, 5 c.

16 Ibid., I-II, 43, 1 c. "Sicut objectum delectationis est bonum apparens conveniens conjunctum: cujus causa efficiens est illud quod facit conjunctionem, vel quod facit convenientiam vel bonitatem, vel apparentiam hujusmodi boni; causa autem per modum dispositionis materialis, est habitus, vel quaecumque dispositio secundum quam fit alicui conveniens aut apparens illud bonum quod est ei conjunctum."

urge toward the good that the appetite rejects the evil which is contrary to the good. For this reason, the first subjective principle of sadness is love. Usually, the sense appetite has been disposed to love certain objects. The sense appetite of a mother, for example, has been so disposed that she loves her son very intensely. It is this love of her son which is the primary source of all the mother's emotions concerning him. A mother's grief at her son's death can be taken as an example. First the mother loves her son. From this love springs a hatred of anything which would separate her from the object of her love. Thus love is the cause of hate.<sup>17</sup> Hate, in turn, is the second inner cause of sadness. Through hate a certain antipathy is formed between the object and the subject. In the example, the mother acquires in her hate an intense repugnance for the death of her son. When the death actually occurs, sadness is the natural result.

Concupiscence is another inclination of the sense appetite which can be a cause of sorrow. Concupiscence is the movement of the appetite toward its proper object. If a greater power hinders the appetite from reaching this object, sadness follows. Anything which militates against the natural movement of

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17 S.T., I-II, 29, 2 c.

the appetite causes the appetite to dislike it. Consequently, concupiscence is a cause of sadness inasmuch as we grieve over a delay in the enjoyment of our desires or over their complete frustration. If a soldier on a troopship has to wait a long time for his meals, he is sad. But if no food is left because the cook misjudged the amount needed, the soldier's desires are completely frustrated; and the sadness is greater. St. Augustine had said that concupiscence was the universal cause of sorrow, but St. Thomas explains that this is impossible. Concupiscence looks to a future good which is not yet possessed. Sadness can also be caused by the removal of pleasures which we are already enjoying. Thomas explains the sense in which St. Augustine meant that concupiscence is the universal cause of sadness. Frequently Augustine used concupiscence to mean love. When concupiscence is equivalent to love, then concupiscence can be understood as the universal cause of sadness.<sup>18</sup>

The subject's love for an object is its desire to be united to that object. The appetite naturally wants to be united with those objects that perfect its nature. For the same reason, the appetite wants to be separated from the things which are contrary to its perfection. Oneness, like goodness, is just

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<sup>18</sup> For Thomas' treatment of these subjective causes of sadness see S.T., I-II, 36, 2.

another aspect of the concept of being. Since the subject seeks goodness, it naturally seeks unity, its own unity as a being and its union with other beings that can perfect it. When this desire for unity is frustrated, sadness follows. The subject's craving for unity is another cause of sorrow.<sup>19</sup>

When the passion is taken as a composite act of body and soul, the faculty and its subjective disposition are considered as the material cause and the object is taken as the final, efficient, and formal cause. However, within the operation of the sense appetite itself, another series of causes can be discerned. Sadness consists in a shrinking of the sense appetite and a constriction of the heart. Within this operation of the composite, the affective state of the soul is the formal aspect, and therefore a sort of formal cause of sadness; the bodily change is the material aspect, and therefore a sort of material cause of the passion.<sup>20</sup> The constriction of the heart receives its determination from the shrinking of the sense appetite. It is the shrinking of the sense appetite which specifies the type of concomitant bodily change. The affective state of anger, for example, would not cause a constriction of the heart but a heating of the blood near the heart. The bodily changes differ be-

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19 S.T., I-II, 36, 3.

20 Ibid., 37, 4 c.

cause they prepare a man to meet each situation properly.

Within the operation of the passion, the affective state of the soul can also be considered as the efficient cause of the bodily change.<sup>21</sup> True, the appetite is passive in respect to the object; but after it has been moved by the object, it can in turn cause the body to react in the manner which is most helpful and fitting in this particular situation.<sup>22</sup>

The effects of sadness will give us a clearer insight into the nature of sadness and its importance. One of the effects of sadness has already been treated. The constriction of the heart is an essential ingredient in the definition of sadness according to St. Thomas. Since the heart is the principle of motion in the body, this constriction impedes the vital motion which flows from the heart to the other members of the body. As this movement becomes sluggish, all voluntary movement of the body becomes more difficult. For this reason St. Thomas says that sadness harms the body more than any other passion. Other passions can become excessive and increase the vital motion beyond measure. Sadness weakens the body of its very nature. Other passions have a bodily change, but their bodily change is in harmony with the vital movement from the heart. As

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21 S.T., I, 20, 1 ad 1.

22 Ibid., I, 80, 2 c.

long as the passion is a normal passion, other passions actually help the body. But fear, despair, and especially sadness injure the body of their very nature even though the emotions are not excessive. Aristotle says that anger and concupiscence have made some people insane. Can sadness be worse than anger or fear? Thomas insists that fear and anger injure the body chiefly because of the admixture of sadness in these emotions. It is the absence of the desired object that leads to fear and anger. Moreover, other emotions have no monopoly on the business of making persons insane. Sadness causes many people to fall into melancholy and insanity.<sup>23</sup>

St. Thomas' prodigious number of works and his vast knowledge of other authors testify to the Angelic Doctor's great love of learning. It is no surprise, then, to find St. Thomas discussing the effects of sadness on learning before he investigates any other effect. All the powers of the soul flow from the essence of the soul and have their wellspring there. The many powers of the soul inhere in one essence, and they function together in an orderly manner. When the soul becomes thoroughly engrossed in the operation of one potency, it cannot attend to the operation of another potency. The soul is one, and it can

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<sup>23</sup> St. Thomas explains these harmful effects of sadness in S.T., I-II, 37, 4.



focus its attention on only one object at a time. Obviously, sensible grief affects the soul quite keenly and occupies most if not all of the latter's attention. When a man is learning something new, great effort and application are required. Consequently, a conflict arises in which sadness is the victor and learning the loser. Sometimes the grief becomes so intense that a man cannot even reflect upon matter he has already learned.

St. Thomas points out that this preoccupation of the soul with sadness will have varying degrees of success with different men. Sadness will not get the better of men who have a great love of learning. Men who love the intellectual life will be able to give their attention to learning more easily and will not be distracted as easily by their sorrow.

Intense sensible pleasure distracts the soul from the higher operation of learning. If the sadness is moderate, it can diminish sensible pleasure and accidentally help the cause of knowledge rather than hinder it. Of itself, however, sadness impedes learning, and to a greater extent than sensible pleasure does. There is one way in which a moderate sadness might help learning. If a man becomes sad enough, he might undertake the discipline necessary for knowledge in the hope that through learning he could be free of his sadness. This is especially true of men who turn to the study of God to obtain peace for

their restless souls.<sup>24</sup>

Thomas tells us that the effects of the passions are sometimes named metaphorically according to their similarity to the movements of sensible bodies. Warmth is attributed to love; expansion to joy; and constriction to sadness. A man is said to be weighed down by sorrow because his proper movements are impeded in the same way as a man would be whose movements are hindered by a heavy burden. Similarly, an evil object weighs down the soul because evil prevents the soul from enjoying its proper object. If the subject does not lose hope, there is a movement to drive out the sadness. When hope goes and anxiety sets in, even the inner operations of the soul cease; and the soul cannot escape no matter where it turns. When torpor encompasses the subject, the external movements of the body become sluggish. As has been seen, sometimes even the power to speak is lost. Sometimes the anguish of soul becomes so extreme that a man becomes constricted and imprisoned within himself. The sorrow weighs down the soul so completely that the man withdraws inside himself and almost loses contact with the external world.<sup>25</sup>

Sadness seems paralyzing enough to slow down any oper-

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<sup>24</sup> The deleterious effects of sadness on the learning process are described in S.T., I-II, 37, 1.

<sup>25</sup> The effects of sadness on the soul is found in S.T., I-II, 37, 2.

ation. In a certain sense this is true. The present evil which is the object of tristitia impedes the proper act of any operation. If the act which we are performing is distasteful to us, we never do it as well as acts which are pleasant. The will and the appetite cause the acts of man. When the subject sees an evil in the object of the act, the appetite does not tend toward the object as vigorously as it otherwise would. When the cause of human acts and operations becomes less active, the acts themselves are considerably weakened. Ordinarily, no boy cleans out the basement with as much zest as he plays a game. No student studies subjects he does not like with as much eagerness as he studies his favorite field. In another sense, however, sadness does not restrict man's activity but rather increases it. The subject's sorrowful reaction to the present evil causes the subject to strive more earnestly to rid himself of the evil and the sadness which follows it. When a man's business begins to lose money, he is sad. But his very sadness makes the man busy himself more zealously to get his business running smoothly again. At the same time, his sadness stops the man from making the same mistakes he had been making.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, sadness has many harmful effects especially

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26 See S.T., I-II, 37, 3.

when it is excessive. A knowledge of the remedies for sadness would be quite valuable. St. Thomas not only gives us this practical advice but the reasons why the remedies assuage the grief. Thus Thomas' treatment is speculative as well as practical. In general, the remedy for sadness is the latter's opposite, delight. Delight is a certain restful relishing of the appetite in the possession of its proper object. Sadness is just the opposite, as it is a restless discontent in the face of evil. Delight has the same relationship to sadness as rest has to fatigue. Sadness brings a certain fatigue or sickness to the appetite. As any rest for the body relieves any bodily fatigue, so any delight lessens any sadness whatsoever no matter what the source of the sadness is. The body can become tired in many ways, but rest will always cure the tiredness. Many things can cause the appetite to be sad, but joy will always dispel the sadness since joy is the latter's contrary. If the appetite is resting in an object and relishing it, it cannot be restless and discontent with another object at the same time. When there is a conflict between joy and sadness, one must win out; for there is only one sensible appetite in any one animal.<sup>27</sup>

Sadness is an act of the composite. Sensualitas does not inhere in the soul alone but in soul and body. When sensible

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27 See S.T., I-II, 38, 1.

apprehension has a delightful object before it, delight follows in the soul and pushes out any sadness which might be there. The constriction of the heart would be relieved, too. In this way, delight first comes to the soul and secondly to the body. The process can be reversed. The body can be refreshed first thus bringing joy to the soul. St. Thomas believes that the general well-being of the body overflows to the heart and relieves its constriction. When any corporal remedy restores the body and the heart to their normal state, the vital motion from the heart resumes; and the sadness ceases. The bodily change is part of the passion. Since the bodily part of sadness is no longer present, the sadness is no longer present. There can be no whole without its parts. Moreover, bodily remedies are pleasant to the senses and cause delight to the sensible appetite in the soul. It is not difficult to see, then, how bodily pleasures mitigate sorrow. Thomas cites sleep and baths as good remedies for sadness because they restore the vital motion from the heart and delight the senses.<sup>28</sup>

St. Thomas has stated that sadness is an obstacle to knowledge. Now he asserts that contemplation of the truth can overcome the evil effects of sadness and even lessen the passion. If a man is able to fight his sadness and contemplate God and his

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28 See S.T., I-II, 38, 5.

future beatitude, his sorrow can be turned into joy. Contemplation of divine things brings the greatest joy to man because intellection is his highest power and God is the most perfect object of this potency.<sup>29</sup> The greater a man's love of wisdom, the greater will be his relief from his sadness. The martyrs testify to this power of contemplation when they rejoice in their sufferings. The pursuit of knowledge can cause sadness because of its difficulty; many things that man discovers to be true will be repugnant to his will; but contemplation of itself causes the keenest delight. The joy which accompanies the proper exercise of the intellect is in the intellectual appetite. However, there is a certain overflow in the powers of the soul from a higher to a lower and vice versa. In this way the joy in the intellectual appetite can lessen the sorrow in the sensible appetite.<sup>30</sup>

The compassion of friends is another remedy for sadness. When a person sees others are grieving at his plight, he feels he is not carrying the burden all by himself. Moreover, his friends' compassion prove their love for him. This knowledge brings delight which automatically assuages his sorrow.<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly enough, St. Thomas states that the tears

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29 S.T., I-II, 3, 5.

30 Ibid., 38, 4.

31 Ibid., 38, 3.

and groans of the mourner alleviate his sorrow. Every evil becomes greater when it is shut up inside the soul where the soul can continually reflect on it. The tears and cries of the weeper force the sorrow to the surface, and the interior grief is lessened as the soul is distracted by exterior things. For this reason, any exterior manifestation of sorrow tends to mitigate it. Besides, weeping is the proper act of a person who is afflicted by some misfortune. Every act which is in accordance with the subject's nature is accompanied by delight. Delight, of course, always disperses the gloom. Sadness is one of man's weapons against evil. As long as the normal reaction to evil is not abused, the tears characteristic of sorrow will lead to joy.<sup>32</sup>

To sum up, both the object and the subject cause sadness. The evil object is in some respect the final, efficient, and formal cause; the subjective disposition of the appetite is the material cause. Within the operation itself, the affective state of sadness is in a sense the efficient and formal cause; the constriction of the heart can be considered as the material cause. Sadness is the most harmful passion to both soul and body. Nevertheless, moderate sadness can be very beneficial in fighting evil. In general, any delight, bodily or intellectual, will relieve sadness.

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32 S.T., I-II, 38, 2.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GOODNESS AND MALICE OF SADNESS

The richness of doctrine found in the Summa Theologiae is organized around the truth that God is the first cause and last end of all creatures. All human acts are studied because some of these acts lead man toward his last end and some do not. The previous chapters have shown what sadness is; this chapter will point out when sadness leads man to his last end and when sadness hinders man in his journey toward God.

The passions as such cannot strictly be called human acts. Only those acts which are proper to man as such can be called human. Of material beings, man alone is master of his own acts; man alone can use intellect and free will in his actions.<sup>1</sup> But the passions are common to both men and brutes.<sup>2</sup> How can St. Thomas consider the goodness and malice of a passion, since a passion is not a human act but an act of man? Only those acts

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1 S.T., I-II, 1, c.

2 Ibid., 6, 1 c.



which proceed from reason can be called good or bad morally.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas answers that the passions are good or bad morally inasmuch as they are controlled by the intellect and will. The will has despotic control over an external member such as an arm. Although the will does not enjoy such complete control over the passions, the will does have "political" control over them.<sup>4</sup>

The will rules the passions in two ways, either by commanding the emotions directly or by not checking them once they have been aroused.<sup>5</sup> Thomas compares the indirect control of the will over the emotions to a captain's management of a ship. A captain does not sink his ship directly, but through carelessness the captain can allow the ship to be sunk.<sup>6</sup> As the first mover of man's acts, the will can control the passions by forcing the lower powers to act rationally. Thus reason can evaluate the situation properly and put the correct picture of the matter before the sense appetite through the mediation of the imagination. By controlling his imagination, a person can control his emotions.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas also distinguishes between antecedent passion

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3 S.T., I-II, 18, 5 c.

4 Ibid., 58, 2 c.

5 Ibid., 24, 1 c; De Ver., 25, 4 c.

6 S.T., I-II, 6, 3 c.

7 De Ver., 25, 4 c.

and consequent passion. Antecedent passion sometimes clouds and obfuscates the reasoning processes. When man acts on first impulse before reason enters in, he is not acting properly as a man; and thus his act cannot be morally good or bad. In any case, antecedent passion would diminish the merit or the guilt of an act.<sup>8</sup> Consequent passion can take place in two ways. Sometimes the will can be so intensely moved toward an object that the movement flows over into the sensitive appetite.<sup>9</sup> At other times, a man can judge that a certain passion is proper and freely encourage an emotion which is rising up within him. In either case, the harmonious concurrence of the lower appetite with the higher appetite would increase the goodness or malice of the act.<sup>10</sup>

There are two more ways in which a passion can be good or evil morally. The passions can have moral implications if they are considered as the object of the will.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, a passion can also be voluntary in cause. At times intense anger or love can completely take away the use of reason and cause tem-

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8 De Ver., 25, 5 c. In his earlier work St. Thomas makes no distinction here between antecedent and consequent passion. Nevertheless, he does state that passion would lessen the moral imputability of the act.

9 De Ver., 26, 6 c.

10 S.T., I-II, 24, 3 ad 1.

11 De Ver., 26, 6 c.

porary insanity. Even this act could be morally evil if the person had willingly allowed himself to reach the stage where he would be blinded by passion. And as long as the passion does not completely prevent the use of reason, some guilt would be present in the act itself.<sup>12</sup>

Since a passion can be good or evil morally, sadness must be examined to determine its moral goodness or malice. Thomas makes repeated mention of the Stoics, who thought that sadness was always evil. According to the Stoics a man grieves only over evil which has befallen him. But man's only good is virtue or moral good. A bodily good is not a good which is proper to man. Since the Stoics admitted only moral good or evil, the wise and virtuous man should never be sad because he avoids the only real evil, moral evil. Once the Stoics judged that sadness was not useful, they were logical in concluding that sadness was irrational and to be avoided completely.<sup>13</sup> Thomas points out one of the chief sources of their difficulty. The Stoics did not distinguish between sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge and consequently did not separate the sensitive appetite from the intellectual appetite. Since a passion does not follow upon rea-

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<sup>12</sup> S.T., I-II, 77, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 59, 3; III, 15, 6 ad 2; III, 46, 6 ad 2; De Ver., 26, 8 ad 9.

<sup>14</sup> S.T., I-II, 24, 2 c.

son, a passion is irrational and evil.<sup>14</sup> Thus to the Stoics the merit of even a morally good act is diminished if an admixture of passion is allowed to enter in.<sup>15</sup>

Thomas asserts that the Stoics are wrong. True, moral good is man's greatest good; but man is a composite of body and soul. A bodily good is a real good to man; and its contrary is a real evil. As long as the passion is moderate and reasonable, sadness can be a virtue. Moreover, no man is so upright that he never commits even a slight fault. And when a man does commit some moral evil, he should be sad about it. If his fault made no difference to him, he would soon do the same thing over again.<sup>16</sup>

Thomas also contends with the Stoic assertion that the passions are not controlled by the intellect. Everyone admits that an external member such as an arm can be commanded by our higher powers. If a man resolves to perform a corporal work of mercy, the interior act of his will is meritorious. However, by commanding his arms and legs to perform the deed exteriorly, a man makes this act more meritorious. Correspondingly, the movements of the passions in themselves are not moral acts; but when man's higher powers encourage a passion or flow over into the

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14 S.T., I-II, 24, 2 c.

15 Ibid., 3 c.

16 Ibid., 59, 3 c.

sensitive appetite, the passion actually helps man to pursue a good or avoid an evil and consequently can add to the merit of an act.<sup>17</sup>

St. Thomas himself holds that sadness can be either morally good or morally evil depending upon the object of the passion and its intensity.

In itself, sadness is an evil inasmuch as it prevents the sensitive appetite from resting in the good.<sup>18</sup> The present concern, however, is about moral evil. In the first place, sadness is perverse if the subject is sad about what is really a good.<sup>19</sup> Sadness can also be evil if it is allowed to become so immoderate that it immobilizes the soul.<sup>20</sup>

There are two species of sadness which are always evil. One of these is sloth (acedia); the other is envy (invidia). Both of these are opposed to the joy which results from charity. Sloth is opposed to the joy which man should have in divine things; envy is opposed to the joy which man should have in the good fortune of others.

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17 S.T., I-II, 24, 3 c.

18 Ibid., 39, 1 c.

19 Ibid., 39, 2 ad 2.

20 Ibid., 39, 3 ad 1.

Sloth is sadness over the divine good in which charity should rejoice. Sloth is always evil, either in itself or in its effect. When a man takes pleasure in what is an apparent good but really evil, his pleasure is perverse. On the other hand, to be sad about an apparent evil which is really a good is just as perverse. Since a spiritual good is a real good, to be sad about the divine good is evil in itself. Here the sadness is evil because its object is a good. Sloth can also be evil in its effect. If his disgust with God is intense enough, a man will desist from good works. Thus sloth can be evil in two ways, in itself or in its effect. Since torpor toward spiritual things is directly opposed to the joy that follows love of God, sloth is a serious aberration of the appetite when consented to.

Thomas considers sloth to be a capital vice, a vice which is the source of other evil acts. This species of sadness leads to despair, cowardliness, disgust with divine law, and a craving for illicit sense pleasures. Sadness will cause a man to do almost anything to relieve himself of his misery. No man can live without some pleasure. If a man finds no delight in spiritual things, he will soon turn to illicit sensual delights.<sup>21</sup>

After treating sloth, which is sadness in the divine

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21 The treatment of sloth is based on S.T., II-II, 35.

good, Thomas turns to envy, which is sadness in the good fortune of other men. There are different types of envy. Sadness always has evil as its object. In envy, the object of the passion is the good of another, but that good considered as one's own evil.<sup>22</sup> If a person is sad about the rise of another because he fears that other person will harm him, he is not experiencing envy as such. His emotion is simply a result of fear and is had without guilt. A person can also be sad about the good of another, not because he begrudges the other his good, but because he is lacking the good which the other possesses. If a man is zealous for the virtue of another, his emotion is not only without guilt but quite praiseworthy. As long as he does not begrudge the other person's possession of temporal goods, a man can be zealous for material goods, too, if his passion is moderate. Properly speaking, however, envy is sadness over the good of another inasmuch as the other is excelling him and lessening his own glory and honor. This type of envy, which is envy properly speaking, is always perverse because a man is grieving over the good of another, in which he should rejoice.

Like sloth, envy is a capital vice, a vice which is the source of other aberrations of the will. An envious man is so

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22 In I Met., 3, n. 63.

sorrowful over the good of another that he will try any means to deprive another of his prosperity. Thus envy leads to calumny, detraction, joy at another's misfortune, or grief at another's prosperity. Envy finally develops into hate itself.<sup>23</sup>

Sadness can thus be a serious moral evil. But sadness can also be good. Inasmuch as sadness prevents the repose of the appetite in the good, it is an evil. However, since according to the disposition of divine providence man must encounter evil, sadness is a good because it is a weapon against evil. Anyone who would not grieve in the face of evil either would not know that the evil existed or would not realize that it was harmful to him. In either case, this lack of knowledge would be an imperfection. Once the presence of evil is supposed, it is good to know about it and to reject it. No one wants to be sad. But once evil is admitted as a fact, a person should know about it and react against it. The knowledge of evil can be had through the right use of reason. And a well-disposed will always rejects evil. Since a moral good is had when there is rectitude of intellect and will, sadness can be a moral good as long as the object of the sadness is evil and the passion is moderate.<sup>24</sup>

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23 The treatment of envy is based on S.T., II-II, 36.

24 S.T., I-II, 39, 1c and 2 c.



St. Thomas makes a distinction which explains further how sadness can be useful. The presence of evil gives rise to two movements of the sense appetite. The first movement of sadness is not useful because the evil is present and a fact. The evil cannot be present and not be present at the same time. The second movement of the appetite flees and rejects the evil which is causing the sadness. Sadness over moral evil is useful because through it man is induced to avoid it. Just as the concomitant pleasure helps man to seek the good, so the concomitant sadness helps man to flee what is evil. If the sadness is immoderate, naturally it will immobilize all operations; but rational sadness will always make one flee evil more readily.<sup>25</sup>

As has been seen, sadness has no goodness or malice in itself since it is a movement of the lower appetite and not of the intellect and will. However, the will can command the lower appetite since the will does have political control over the passions. In itself, sadness is indifferent; it can be either morally good or morally evil. There are two things which must be avoided to prevent the sadness from being evil. In the first place, the object of the sadness must be a real evil and not just an apparent evil. Secondly, the passion must not be immoderate.

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25 S.T., I-II, 39, 3.

When these two conditions are verified, sadness is a weapon given to us by God to fight against the ubiquitous presence of evil.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The reader's gaze has been focused upon a very common experience in every person's life, the passion sadness. Sadness has been held up to the light and turned this way and that until every facet of it has been exposed to the reader's view. What knowledge has this philosophical reflection yielded? All of us already had immediate knowledge of sadness from our direct, personal contact with it. Now the reader enjoys a philosophical knowledge because he knows sadness through its causes, intrinsic and extrinsic.

When the essence of sorrow is examined, the intellect discovers that sadness belongs to that unique class of being which is called movement. A gradual change with an accompanying loss of a contrary form is proper to material beings; and sadness is a passion properly speaking only because of the concomitant bodily change, the constriction of the heart and the general cessation of bodily movement. But sadness also involves a movement--though in a different sense--of the immaterial power which is the sense appetite. Sadness is an agitation of this power, a movement away from the object of the emotion.

Sadness is an act of the sense powers. It follows sense cognition and is an operation of the composite of body and soul since the constriction of the heart is an essential constituent of the act. Sadness is applied to the rational appetite only in a wide sense or metaphorically. The rejection of evil by the will is similar to the reaction against evil by the sense appetite; but the operation of the will is essentially independent of any bodily change and follows intellection, not sense cognition.

Sadness is to be distinguished, too, from the sense cognition of an evil. Sadness follows the apprehension of evil but is distinct from it. Two baseball spectators may sit in the same stands and watch their teams lose the same game. Their cognition of the fact is objective and identical. But the intensity and duration of each one's reaction against the defeat would depend upon the individual's interest in the team and his emotional sensitivity.

A passion is so named because it is caused by an extrinsic agent, which in the case of sadness is evil. However, the subject is also a cause of the passion. Reactions to the same situation may differ widely depending upon the loves and hates and emotional make-up of the individuals affected. It is especially true of the passions that "Omne quod recipitur, secun-

dum modum recipientis recipitur."<sup>1</sup>

Thomas treats of sadness because it is an act of man, an act which can help or hinder a person in the attainment of his final beatitude. It is useless, then, for a person to become so pre-occupied with the evil in the world that he becomes immobilized and physically harmed by excessive sadness. Extreme sadness defeats its own purpose. How can sadness help a person fight evil--as God intended it to do--if it renders a person unable to cope with the adverse situation?

Because of the extreme dangers to body and soul, sadness must be kept in hand. A person does not have despotic control over his emotions, but his will can turn the attention of the soul from one object to another. Sadness follows cognition of evil. No realist has much difficulty discovering evil in the world about him and in himself, but a person would be just as blind who did not see the magnificence and wholesomeness of God's creation. A pessimist who magnifies the evil around him is not a well-balanced person. If the purpose of sadness is to be achieved, a person's imagination and outlook on life must be controlled. Since any joy and pleasure mitigates sorrow, anyone severely afflicted by grief should also take care that he gets a moderate amount of wholesome recreation.

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1 S.T., I, 75, 5 c.

By controlling his apprehensive powers, a person can moderate the intensity and duration of his sadness. But the subject is a cause of the passion as well as the object. Each individual must develop a well-balanced and integrated emotional make-up. An extremely sensitive set of emotions is as troublesome as a very dull and phlegmatic temperament is useless.

Since sadness is a weapon against evil, it is not to be entirely suppressed. Just as man needs joy to help him pursue the good, so he needs sadness to help him flee evil and thus reach his everlasting beatitude, where God will wipe away all tears.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by **Mr. Benjamin J. Urmston, S.J.**, has been read and approved by three members of the Department of **Philosophy**.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

September 8, 1955  
Date

R.W. Schmidt, S.J.  
Signature of Adviser